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U.S. House of Representatives

Committee on Agriculture

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September 18, 2020

The Honorable Bill Northey
Under Secretary
Farm Production and Conservation
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Under Secretary Northey,

I am writing to share my concern regarding the exclusion of Minnesota counties in the Risk Management Agency's (RMA) decision to permit farmers who planted cover crops on prevented plant acres in select counties in North and South Dakota to hay, graze, or chop those fields beginning September 1st rather than November 1st.

Flooding and excessive rainfall in parts of the country has resulted in a significant amount of prevented plant claims under Federal crop insurance this year. These unforeseen weather events and the need for animal feed has pushed farmers to ask for flexibility around the use of a cover crop planted on prevented plant acreage for haying, grazing and cutting for silage.

Farmers in my district have faced the same weather events as farmers in North and South Dakota, but they have been excluded from this provision. The decision not to include contiguous counties across the state line in Minnesota doesn't make sense if your decision was based on weather impacts.

I would like clarification as to why farmers in Minnesota counties are ineligible for the earlier date to hay, graze or chop cover crops planted on prevented plant acres this year. What basis did the agency use in determining what counties to approve and why was that basis not made publicly available in the August 17th RMA Managers Bulletin (MGR-20-022) that went out on this issue?

I look forward to your response on this matter.

Sincerely,



Collin C. Peterson
Chairman